

## *Revelation Introduction and Chapter 1*

**Author:** John the Apostle (one of Jesus' original 12 disciples) has almost universally been accepted as the author of the Revelation. "Perhaps more than any other book in the New Testament, the Apocalypse enjoyed wide distribution and early recognition." – by the early 200's AD there is record of its acceptance as inspired Scripture.

- John also wrote the Gospel of John, and the three letters 1-3 John.
- Irenaeus tells us that John had settled in Ephesus, but that later he had been arrested and banished to the island of Patmos to work in the mines which is where he wrote the book (Revelation 1:9). This was during Roman emperor Domitian's reign (81-96 AD).
- Additionally, some of the other early church fathers wrote that the Roman government let John return to Ephesus after the emperor Domitian died, which was in 96 AD.

**Date:** A date of 95-96 AD is the most likely date for the writing of this book. If correct, this is the last recorded book of the inspired New Testament canon.

**Destination of Book:** The destination of this letter was to seven churches in Asia Minor, listed in chapters 2 & 3 (Revelation 1:4, 11), with an individual and personal letter included for each church.

### **Historical Perspective:**

- At this time in history (90's AD), there was an uptick of the Roman government's persecution of the Church.
  - There had been persecution of the Church by this time in history, but most of the persecution had come from unbelieving Jews. Ironically, the initial wave of persecution was led by the former Pharisee, the Apostle Paul, before his conversion (See Acts 7-9).
  - This first recorded state-led persecution of the Church is found in Acts 12:1-4, but even then, Herod's motivation was to please the unbelieving Jews.
  - Another indirect state-led persecution of the Church happened in 49-50 AD when the Emperor Claudius ordered non-Roman citizen Jews to leave Rome. Ironically, the reason for this expulsion of the Jews was given by a Roman historian who wrote: "Jews at Rome caused continuous disturbances at the instigation of Crestus."<sup>1</sup> This was recorded in history and mentioned in Actus 18:2.
  - The first "real" and intentional state-led persecution was a result of a catastrophe in Rome. On July 19, AD 64, a fire broke out in Rome, destroying ten of the city's fourteen districts. The inferno raged for six day and seven nights, flaring sporadically for an additional three days. Though the fire probably started accidentally in an oil warehouse, rumors swirled that Emperor Nero had ordered the inferno, so he could rebuild Rome according to his own liking. Nero tried to stamp out the rumors – but to no avail. He then looked for a scapegoat. And since two of the districts untouched by the fire were disproportionately populated by Christians, he shifted the blame to them.
    - Nero's persecution was horrendous and barbaric – it included sewing Christians in in the skins of wild beasts and then allowing wild dogs to attack them and eat them, and then others he set on fire and used as night torches in his garden.
  - The second intentional state-led persecution was conducted by the Emperor Domitian (81-96 AD). History tells us that he instituted some policies at a governmental level that put Christians at serious risk in this culture:

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<sup>1</sup> Suetonius, Roman historian born in 69 AD.

- One such law stated, “That no Christian, once brought before the tribunal, should be exempted from punishment without renouncing his religion.”
- If famine, pestilence, or earthquakes afflicted any of the Roman provinces, all of these events were laid at the feet of Christians, and they were blamed and held accountable.
- These persecutions then led to an increase in “informers” who gladly swore away the lives of innocent Christians in exchange for financial remuneration.
- History tells us that Timothy, the disciple of Paul, was beaten to death in Ephesus in 97AD because he confronted a group of pagan worshippers during one of their feasts.
- This is the same Emperor who, as history tells us, boiled the Apostle John in oil and expelled him to work in the mines on the Island of Patmos after he did not die from the boiling.

**Purposes for Writing:**

1. To encourage believers who were presently suffering persecution at the hands of the government and secular society surrounding them. Hope, or confident expectation of the future, can have a calming impact on the present (See 2 Peter 3:10-15).
  - a. The fact that our Messiah is in control and will be the ultimate Victor, allows believers to rest in hope, that all things will be made right someday.
2. Because “ALL Scripture is profitable,” and the Bible would be incomplete without the Book of Revelation.
  - a. Many Old and New Testament books provide new details and give added information of prophetic truth regarding the end times, but only Revelation draws them all together into a final conclusion.
  - b. Revelation supplements and organizes in one book the apocalyptic sections of Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Psalms. Additionally, it further expands upon and gives further details of Jesus’ Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25).
  - c. Revelation gives us in-depth insight and details of the events of the Day of the Lord. Many other passages deal with this period of time, but not to the extent that Revelation does.
3. This book clearly emphasizes, affirms, and confirms what each believer should know: Jesus Christ is the center of the universe and the center of God’s Grand Plan!
  - a. This provides the **THEME** of the entire book, which is...*Jesus Christ is Lord*:
    - i. Of History (chapter 1)
    - ii. Of the churches (chapters 2-3)
    - iii. Of heaven (chapters 4-5)
    - iv. Of the earth in judgment (chapters 6-19)
    - v. Of lords (chapter 19)
    - vi. Of the earth as King (chapter 20)
    - vii. Of eternity future (chapters 21-22)
  - b. We see in this book the reality of the statement found in Philippians 2:9-11, that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
4. Finally, and as it relates to us in the present, this book discloses conditions that will be present in the end-time system of the beast and the final world empire (politically, religiously, economically, and internationally).
  - a. So, although the return of Jesus Christ for His Church at the Rapture is imminent, those members of the body of Christ who recognize a movement in society towards the conditions mentioned in the book can realize His return is even more imminent.

**Brief Outline and Unique Promise:**

- ✚ **The Unique Promise:** A unique promise is given in Revelation 1:3 – “The one who *reads* and those who *hear* the words of this prophecy, and *keep* those things which are written in it are *blessed*.”
- ✚ **Brief Outline:** The outline of the book is found in Revelation 1:19
  - The things which you *have seen* (chapter 1)
  - The things which *are* (chapter 2-3)
  - The things which *will take place after this* (4-22)

### **V1-V3 - Introduction**

- ✚ **(Verse 1):** God the Father gave this revelation to Jesus Christ for the purpose of \_\_\_\_\_ His bond-servants what must shortly take place.
  1. The Book of Revelation can be \_\_\_\_\_, and it was God’s intention to communicate something, not \_\_\_\_\_ something! How do we know this?
    - a. “Revelation” means to \_\_\_\_\_, an uncovering, an unveiling. God wants to reveal Jesus Christ as **LORD!**
    - b. “To show” means to point out, to present to the sight, to cause to \_\_\_\_\_.
  2. “Things which must shortly take place”
    - a. “Shortly” is an adverb describing the speed with which these things will take place or come about. In its use here, it is **NOT** describing a chronological time element.
    - b. This word “shortly” along with the phrase “the time is near” in verse 3 has a legitimate semantic range of \_\_\_\_\_ meanings: (1) Imminency, (2) Certainty (i.e., “must” take place), and (3) Rapidity of movement once these things begin...an **urgency** oozes throughout the book. (See Acts 25:4-6, Romans 16:20).
  3. Jesus Christ “signified” or sent and gave signs through an angel to the Apostle John. The communication \_\_\_\_\_ seems to be God the Father **TO** Jesus Christ **TO** an angel **TO** John **TO** a written book **TO** a preacher (angel of the church) and **TO** the readers.
- ✚ **(Verse 2):** John records his role as merely a witness of the Word of God, Jesus’ testimony, and all he saw – The phrase “I saw” is used 44X in this book. John merely \_\_\_\_\_ what he was shown and told to write down for the churches.
- ✚ **(Verse 3):** John’s message to his audience and to persuade and \_\_\_\_\_ them to undertake the task of reading and understanding this book is found here.
  1. The one who *reads* and those who *hear*, the words of this prophecy, and *keep* those things which are written in it are *blessed*.
    - a. This is the \_\_\_\_\_ book in the Bible which specifically promises a blessing to those who read, hear, and apply it!

- b. Reading, hearing, and keeping are all present, active, participles explaining **HOW** one can be \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e., happy).
- c. The use of “hear” and “keep” in this description of HOW one can be blessed is telling, because this reflects one’s \_\_\_\_\_ value for the teaching described here.

#### **V4-V8 - Greetings to John’s Audience**

🔥 **(Verse 4):** The revelation John records is for and addressed to the \_\_\_\_\_ churches in Asia Minor mentioned in verse 11.

1. Notice John \_\_\_\_\_ the churches with grace and peace from our trinitarian God: God the Father (v4), God the Holy Spirit (v4), and God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (v5).
  - a. God the Father greets the churches and is described as Him Who \_\_\_\_\_, and Who \_\_\_\_\_, and Who is to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. God the Holy Spirit also greets the churches through John – He is described as the “\_\_\_\_\_ spirits” who are before God the Father’s throne.
    - 1) Most likely this is a reference to the Holy Spirit and His seven-fold \_\_\_\_\_ as identified in Isaiah 11:2-3. This is a way to say the “fullness” of His ministry and capabilities.
    - 2) Additionally, the “seven spirits” are greeting the churches and are \_\_\_\_\_ in between God the Father and God the Son.
  - c. **(Verse 5):** Jesus is described in four ways with the article “THE” used each time – this indicates that He is the \_\_\_\_\_ and only true one.
    - 1) “**THE** faithful witness” - “Witness” means one who can give information, or one who can bring something to light, or one who can \_\_\_\_\_ **something**.
      - a) Jesus’ declaration and exegesis of the Father in His incarnation was something He brought to light and confirmed (John 1:18).
    - 2) “**THE** firstborn from the dead” - “Firstborn” implies there will be \_\_\_\_\_!
      - a) Now, Psalm 89:27 ties this truth and the \_\_\_\_\_ description together. The fact that He alone is the unique Son of God, the unique One who rose from the dead, also qualifies Him to rule over the kings of the earth!
    - 3) “**THE** ruler over the kings of the earth” – “Ruler” means chief, prince or magistrate.
      - a) Remember, John has already “\_\_\_\_\_” everything he is about to record - so this is kind of a “spoiler” here! (See Revelation 11:15, 19:15-16). – Jesus wins!

- b) Although Jesus' rule as ruler over the kings of the earth awaits a future day, John can speak of these things with certainty as if they have \_\_\_\_\_ happened (See Revelation 11:15).
- 4) **"THE"** ("who" is an article "o") One who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own \_\_\_\_\_.
- a) This obviously references the work of Jesus Christ on the cross as a \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins.
- b) Notice what cleanses sin – it is \_\_\_\_\_! It is **NOT** water, **NOT** money, **NOT** church attendance, **NOT** good works, and **NOT** faithful living or behavioral change! (See Hebrews 9:22).
- c) And notice that Jesus Christ's work for us is tied to his \_\_\_\_\_ – that was His motivation for doing what He did (See John 15:13 and Romans 5:8).
- 5) **(Verse 6):** ("**THE**" One who) made us kings and priests - The work Christ accomplished \_\_\_\_\_ making us a kingdom and priests to "His" God and Father.
- a) Corporately, those whom He loved and washed in His blood (i.e., believers) are made into a kingdom of priests, \_\_\_\_\_.
- b) "Priests" serve and minister to the Lord, which is exactly what believers are doing \_\_\_\_\_ by offering spiritual sacrifices to the Lord (1 Peter 2:5), and what they \_\_\_\_\_ in the Millennium and into eternity.
- c) "Priests" mediate, and have access to God, illustrating the believer's \_\_\_\_\_ access to Him through Jesus Christ. Additionally, believers will \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ to men and women and vice versa during the Millennium as they function as His administrative representatives during that time.
- 🚩 **(V7):** "He is coming! - This is a quote from Matthew 24:30 and this is a \_\_\_\_\_ of the prophecy in Acts 1:9
1. In all actuality, Matthew 24:30/Acts 1:9 have as their \_\_\_\_\_ a few verses in the Old Testament. Zechariah 12:10-14, and Daniel 7:13-14.
- 🚩 **(V8):** God is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, and He has always existed, and will always exist. But WHO is exactly is John talking about here?
1. Most translations have these words in \_\_\_\_\_ attributed to Jesus **Christ**, and this fits with the same phrase used later of Jesus Christ (Revelation 22:13).

2. But notice that the phrase used here “who is and who was and who is to come” was used of God the \_\_\_\_\_ a few verses earlier (verse 4).
  - a. In reality, either one is \_\_\_\_\_ – God the Son and God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Lord – the Almighty God!
3. Why is this here? - The implied thought is that the prophecy of v7 (i.e., Christ’s coming) is assured to be \_\_\_\_\_ because of the credibility of the unchanging One making these promises.

***V9-V11 - Description of the Circumstances of How John Received the Vision***

🔱 *(Verse 9)*: John was banished to the island of Patmos during Emperor Domitian’s reign (81-96 AD) for his Christian faith.

1. Notice how John refers to himself here: (1) As the seven churches’ “brother,” and (2) “Companion” meaning one in fellowship with OR a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. WHAT specifically is John “sharing with them” in? \_\_\_\_\_ things are mentioned: (1) In the “tribulation,” (2) The “Kingdom,” and (3) “Patience” of Jesus Christ.
  - b. John and his readers are brothers and companions “remaining under” the current tribulation with the hope of the \_\_\_\_\_ kingdom and coming of Christ in mind.

🔱 *(Verses 10-11)*: John was “in the Spirit” on the Lord’s day (i.e., Sunday).

1. Some will say that John was in a \_\_\_\_\_ of some sort here, but that specific Greek work is not used here - the image evokes a man seeking the face of God in profound meditation.
2. This is definitely a \_\_\_\_\_ situation, given to John multiple times in the Revelation (See also 4:2, 17:3, 21:10), though this is ***NOT*** a normal Christian experience.
3. John heard Jesus speak to him in a loud voice - this is the \_\_\_\_\_ indication that the Jesus that John is about to interact with looks different than how John remembered Him.
4. John is to record and share what he sees for a specific \_\_\_\_\_ - the seven churches in Asia Minor.

***V12-V17 - Description of What Jesus Looked Like in John’s Vision and John’s Reaction***

🔱 *(Verse 12)*: As John turns to look to see the person behind the voice he heard, his attention is immediately drawn to seven \_\_\_\_\_ – these will later be identified as the seven \_\_\_\_\_ in Asia Minor.

1. This is a subtle reminder and visual \_\_\_\_\_ of one of the Church’s roles in the world - we are children of light designed to shine the light of the Jesus Christ to the world (Ephesus 5:8-14).

2. It is interesting that Paul writes of this in Ephesians, and then Jesus threatens to “remove this church’s lampstand” from its place in the \_\_\_\_\_ to this church in Revelation 2:5.
- ✚ *(Verse 13)*: Then John sees the Son of Man (Daniel 7:13-14 and Mark 13:26), who is identified as \_\_\_\_\_ later in the midst of the seven lampstands.
    1. The fact that Jesus was in the midst of the lampstands would have drawn imagery of a \_\_\_\_\_ in Israel ministering in the tabernacle or temple.
    2. Isn’t it \_\_\_\_\_ to know that Jesus Christ is in the midst of His churches?
    3. This gives us a strong image of Jesus’ involvement, \_\_\_\_\_ and care for those in His body.
  - ✚ Jesus is described in the following ways:
    1. *(Verse 13)*: Jesus was clothed with a garment down to His feet, girded with a golden band across His chest – much like a priest and a \_\_\_\_\_.
      - a. The fact that He is girded about the \_\_\_\_\_, rather than the waist could signify a dignity or a magisterial function of judgment rather than a priestly function which would have had Him girded about the \_\_\_\_\_.
    2. *(Verse 14)*: Jesus’ head and hair were like wool/white as snow.
      - a. Daniel described God the \_\_\_\_\_ in much the same way (Daniel 7:9) and this is one way of stressing the equality of Jesus with the Father, especially his eternal pre-existence.
      - b. Additionally, this imagery reflects His \_\_\_\_\_, and sinless perfection. If that is the case, aren’t you thankful you are found in His righteousness.
    3. Jesus’ eyes like a flame of fire
      - a. This illustrates and represents penetrating vision (in \_\_\_\_\_) and supernatural intelligence (i.e., He sees everything)
      - b. The Son of Man is perceptive, and able to see things clearly and accurately which may be hidden from others (i.e., He cannot be \_\_\_\_\_).
    4. *(Verse 15)*: Jesus’ feet are like fine brass/as if refined
      - a. Some would say this material boasted greater hardness than the two metals used to make it, suggesting \_\_\_\_\_ - others would say it is an allusion to his purity.
      - b. Additionally, this may symbolize divine \_\_\_\_\_ as evidenced from Old Testament examples of the brazen/brass altar, and other bronze/brass tools used in the sacrifices for sin.
    5. Jesus’ voice as the sound of “many” waters
      - a. His voice was loud and drowned out every other \_\_\_\_\_ around him.

6. *(Verse 16)*: Jesus held seven stars – which are later identified in verse 20 as the angels of the seven \_\_\_\_\_ in His right hand.
- a. ***Who are these “angels?”***: Are they angelic beings from heaven, and does each church have its own \_\_\_\_\_ angel?
- 1) Most of the rebukes in chapters 2 and 3 are 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular meaning \_\_\_\_\_ the messenger and those to whom he is taking the letter are being rebuked. This would ***NOT*** work with unfallen angel.
  - 2) Most likely, these “angels” are \_\_\_\_\_ messengers or representatives from each of these churches who are going to deliver their personal letter and the Revelation to their individual churches.
    - a) This same word is used of \_\_\_\_\_ messengers or representatives in Matthew 11:10 and Mark 1:2 of John the Baptist. It is used in Luke 7:24 of the disciples of John the Baptist, and it used in Luke 9:52 of the disciples of Jesus.
7. A sharp two-edged sword came out of Jesus’ mouth.
- a. The mention of a sword causes many to think of Hebrews 4:12 here, but the word “sword” used here (*romphaia*) is \_\_\_\_\_ from the word translated “sword” used (*machaira*) in Hebrews 4:12.
- 1) The word used in our context was a longer sword and was figuratively used of \_\_\_\_\_. This fits with its other uses in Revelation (2:16; 6:8; 19:15, 21)
  - 2) So, although, some would view this sword figuratively as “His Word,” I think the better interpretation is emphasizing His \_\_\_\_\_ judgment.
8. Jesus’ countenance was like the bright shining sun.
- a. John had seen something like this before during the \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 17:1-8). This was a glimpse of His pre-incarnate glory which was then restored to Him following His ascension.
- b. Jesus prayed for this in John 17:4-5, and this \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus’ pure holiness and righteousness.
- ✚ *(V17)*: John’s reaction was one of fear when he saw Jesus.
1. John was overwhelmed by this vision of Jesus Christ and he falls \_\_\_\_\_ (like a dead man) at Jesus’ feet.
  2. Notice Jesus’ response - “He laid His right hand on me” and said, “do not be afraid.”
    - a. There is a tenderness of care here, ***NOT*** only in physical touch, but also through comforting \_\_\_\_\_ – “do not be afraid.”

***V18-V20 – Jesus’ Purpose for Giving John the Revelation***



- ✚ (V18): Further identification of the Son of Man, revealing that He is indeed Jesus – “He who lives, and \_\_\_\_\_ dead...”
  1. “I have the keys of Hades and of Death” – “Have” is a *present, active, indicative* indicating that Jesus presently has the “keys of Hades and of Death,” and because He is \_\_\_\_\_ forevermore there is no way He will give those up.
  2. This imagery communicates that He has power over these things \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Corinthians 15:55-57).
- ✚ (V19): This verse provides the outline for the entire book of Revelation.
  1. John was to write about the things which he \_\_\_\_\_ *seen* (in his visions) - Chapter 1.
  2. John was to write about the things which \_\_\_\_\_ presently at the time of his writing (the state of the local churches) - Chapters 2-3.
  3. John was to write about the things which \_\_\_\_\_ *take place* after this - Chapters 4-22 (the future tribulation, millennial kingdom, and eternal state).
  4. Notice the careful wording here – “the things which will take place *after this*” – After what? After the things that are, which is the \_\_\_\_\_ Age.
- ✚ (V20): Jesus here provides the interpretation of what the seven stars and seven lampstands are.
  1. The seven stars are the seven angels (or \_\_\_\_\_) of the seven churches.
  2. The seven lampstands are the seven \_\_\_\_\_ in Asia Minor.